November 2026

AWIS
ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE
PHILADELPHIA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER





AWIS PHL Board representation at Rooted in Culture Event 10/12/2026. (Left to right: Samar Nasser Chehimi, PhD, Thiele Rosales, PhD, and Ariel Myatt, MS)

AWIS-PHL Celebrates Hispanic Hertiage Month

On October 12th, AWIS Philadelphia helped sponsor Rooted in Culture, an event at the University of Pennsylvania celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month.* Chapter members spoke with young scientists and established researchers about our mission and programs, and learned firsthand about the experiences of Hispanic scientists in the U.S.

The featured speaker was Dr. Angela Fernandez-Iglesias, founder of Ciencia con Acento ("Science with an Accent") and Product Manager at Rockland Immunochemicals. Dr. Fernandez-Iglesias traced her journey from Spain to Boston, where she pursued her PhD in Biomedicine. As a newcomer to the U.S., she faced significant barriers: English was not her first language, and American culture was unfamiliar. Rather than letting these obstacles hold her back, she leveraged her scientific skills to advance socially and professionally. Along the way, she reframed mentoring: what she once saw as a secondary duty as a student became a source of valuable clues for her future networking and career pursuits.

Continued on page 3

AWIS PHL Announcements

AWIS PHL Hike!
Sunday, Nov 15th, 10:30am
Manayunk bridge (NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION)
RSVP Here

Save the Date!
STEM Connections: networking with Merck
Dec 1st
Location TBD



Chapter President Eileen Collyer, PhD and Programming Chair Thiele Rosales, PhD on a beautiful autumn hike on Nov 1st.

Upcoming Events

- Nov 12: Managing Time, Energy & Competing Priorities: The Front-Burner Reset- AWIS Webinar
- Nov 18: WIB East Coast Chapters: Biotech Industry & Job Trends Across the Eastern US- Women in Bio
  - Friendsgiving con Acento- Cienca Con Acento
- Nov 20: Philadelphia Healthcare, Pharma, and Business Networking Event- SUM OF FIVE USA

November Observances

- American Diabetes Month
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month
- National Native American Heritage Month
- Day of the Dead (Nov 1)
- National Ladies Learning Code Day (Nov 6)
- National Cancer Awareness Day (Nov 7)
- Diwali (Nov 8)
- National STEM/STEAM Day (Nov 8)
- World Immunization Day (Nov 8)
- Veterans Day (Nov 11)
- International Girls Day (Nov 14)
- National Rural Health Day (Nov 16)
- Transgender Day of Rememberence (Nov 20)
- Thanksgiving (Nov 28)

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Top Story Continued

During her postdoc at Penn, Dr. Fernandez-Iglesias discovered a passion for management and cross-team coordination. She often asked her students, and herself, "What do people trust you with?" That question helped her identify where she belonged in the scientific world and served as another guidepost for her career.

Then came her biggest roadblock: she was laid off from her first job. As someone who has experienced losing a first "real job," I felt my heart drop at this point in her story. Although I knew her presence as a keynote speaker promised a happy ending, I also know how heartbreaking and final such a moment can feel. Her most important takeaway, she emphasized, was seeing **networking itself as research, a way to systematically understand the biology career landscape**.



It was during this period that she founded Ciencia con Acento, which helps Spanish-speaking students and professionals navigate the American STEM landscape. For her, **community is not optional.** It is a building block of both the individual and the network. Community can change who you become and deepen your sense of belonging. Cultivating it led her to grow as a scientific writer and communicator, and she came to see herself not just as a scientist, but as a storyteller, connector, and strategist.

She closed with practical advice for the audience: run one small experiment. Test one skill for 90 days and see how it goes. If you enjoy it and do well, add it to your repertoire; even failure is a result worth noting. Above all, remember that your title is not your whole identity. Being a "bench scientist" does not define the limits of what you can do. Explore yourself through small experiments throughout your career, and you will build both yourself and your network. AWIS Philadelphia is a great organization for testing your small experiments. Looking forward to seeing more at our next event!
- Ariel Myatt, MS, Membership Chair and Newsletter Author

*All sponsors: Ciencia Con Acento, SACNA UPenn, INSPIRE, CBD Wellness Committee

Science in the News

- Federal Research Award Grants Fall to a 6-year Low
- Dr. Mary Brunkow's Nobel-Winning Breakthrough
- Approval of a cheap version of HIV-prevention shot lenacapavir raises hopes in low-income countries
- The first new sunscreen type in 25 years hits US shelves

Member Spotlights



Eleanor (Ellie) Brown, PhD
Communications Chair

If you have ever received an email from AWIS Philadelphia within the last few years, chances are it's because Ellie Brown, PhD is on it! As Chair of the AWIS Chapter's committee (2003-04) she played a part in the establishment of more chapters and their increased visibility. Her continuing involvement in AWIS-PHL has resulted in life-long friendships and an appreciation of the upcoming cohort of local women scientists.

In her professional career, she earned a PhD in Chemistry from Drexel University for research on the Kinetics of Metalloporphyrin Formation. Upon graduation, she accepted a National Research Council postdoctoral fellowship to the Eastern Regional Research Center (ERRC), U.S.D.A. where she began the study of protein structure-function relationships in a variety of agriculturally important systems (dairy, poultry, and leather). Between 1985 and 1995 Dr. Brown was part of a small group who pioneered the molecular modeling of non-crystalline proteins, mainly collagen and caseins. She formally retired from ERRC in 2018, and enjoys continuing as a Collaborator assisting her colleagues.

Neha Sindhu, PhD
Social Media Chair



Neha is a bioinformatician and recently began her post-doc at Yale University in the lab of Dr. Ron Breaker. Here, she will be performing computational research on riboswitches. She obtained her PhD from the University of Delaware, where she worked on multiomics & single-cell bioinformatics in cancer cells and embryonic stem cells.

Her association with AWIS started as a mentee in the mentoring circles. She was a member of the outreach committee last term, and is currently serving as the social media chair of AWIS-PHL. She's a big fan of reading, a good chai, and fostering a supportive community for women and gender minorities in professional spaces.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Have an article idea?

Have an accomplishment you'd like to share?

Do you have any STEM-related artwork you'd like the community to see?

Contact Ariel
Membership@awisphl.org